

addenda

The University of Tennessee at Martin Faculty and Staff Newsletter | Nov. 24, 2025



Candidates for the position of provost and senior vice chancellor of academic affairs who took part in public forums were (l-r) Dr. Aimee Shouse, whose public forum was held Nov. 10; Dr. K. Renee Fister, whose public forum was held Nov. 17; and Dr. Laurie Couch, whose public forum was held Nov. 20. All public forums were held in the Phillip Watkins Auditorium in the Ed and Carolyn Boling University Center.

Provost candidates take part in public forums

Three candidates for the position of provost and senior vice chancellor for academic affairs visited the UT Martin campus and took part in public forums during their visits. Faculty and staff were encouraged to attend the public forums and offer feedback about the candidates.

Dr. Aimee Shouse visited UT Martin on Nov. 10-11 and had her forum Nov. 10.

Shouse is associate provost and associate vice president for curriculum and faculty affairs at Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas, where she also serves as dean of faculty. In these roles, Shouse oversees the university's Center for Educational Excellence for faculty professional development and the Office of Curriculum and Catalog, serving faculty and administrators at four Tarleton State instructional sites.

Shouse earned her Bachelor of Science degree in political science and government from the University of Central Arkansas and her doctorate in political science from Vanderbilt University.

Dr. K. Renee Fister visited UT Martin on Nov. 17-18 and had her forum Nov. 17.

Fister is associate provost for Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky. In this position, she serves as graduate coordinator, develops strategies for curricula needs and supports dual credit enrollments. She supervises institutional effectiveness, sponsored programs, McNair Scholars and a Department of Energy grant. Fister also assists with the academic affairs budget and predicting enrollment.

Fister earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky, and her master's and doctorate degrees from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. All of her degrees are in mathematics.

Dr. Laurie Couch visited UT Martin on Nov. 20-21 and had her forum Nov. 20.

Couch is provost and senior vice president of academic affairs at Salisbury State University in Maryland. Her duties include overseeing faculty and student success, curriculum, enrollment management, strategic planning and research. She is also responsible for instructional design and delivery, student academic support, policy oversight, experiential learning, program

review and budget management.

Couch was previously associate provost for undergraduate education and student success at Morehead State University in Kentucky, where she also was a psychology faculty member for 26 years.

Couch earned her bachelor's degree in psychology from Mississippi State University and her doctorate and master's degree in experimental psychology from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

UT Martin's chief academic officer position was previously held by Dr. Philip Cavalier, who became president of Kutztown University in Pennsylvania in July. Dr. Stephanie Kolitch is the university's transitional provost until the position is filled. The position is expected to be filled by the end of 2025.

Faculty and staff may provide feedback on the candidates through Monday, Dec. 1. That link can be found [at this site](#).

Information about the candidates for position of provost and senior vice chancellor for academic affairs can be found [at this site](#).

YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff

Dr. Jamye Long and **Dr. Cooper Johnson**, both professors of management, recently co-led an interactive training on the topic of employee performance evaluations for Go Cloud Careers.

In their latest training, the topic ignited conversations about the necessity of employee accountability, the value of improvement plans to employees and organizations, and the significance of professional standards.



Long

Go Cloud Careers is an organization that helps people



Johnson

build elite, executive-level technology careers.

Dr. Chuck Grigsby-Calage, assistant professor of agricultural economics, published a paper titled “The varying effects of dollar stores on food access: A machine learning analysis.”

The paper was published in the Oct. 31 publication of the American Journal of Agricultural Economics. The article can be found [at this site](#).

The research examines whether dollar store entry reduces access to grocery stores.

Since the early 2000s, dollar store proliferation has prompted numerous communities to



Grigsby-Calage

enact policies restricting their growth, citing concerns about competition with local grocery stores and reduced food access.

The research found significant effects in urban areas that experience dollar store entry with a single grocery store at baseline, constituting 14% of treated urban block groups.

In these already-underserved areas, dollar store openings led to statistically significant declines in grocery store access that grew with additional entries.

Effects were strongly correlated with poverty rates, limited vehicle access and dependence on public assistance.

Ronne Cox, assistant professor and electronic resources and discovery librarian, and **Jared Teague**, associate professor of engineering, co-presented the session “From Dice to Dialogue: Reimagining library engagement through innovative nontraditional programming” at the Hawai’i Library Association’s annual fall conference held Nov. 14-15.

The presentation highlighted the library’s Dungeon & Dragons workshops and events, using these as an innovative approach to creating a community of belonging,



Cox

encouraging unique avenues to acclimate students to the library and its resources, and eliminating barriers that hinder student success.

This session explored how



Teague

nontraditional programming connected students with transferable skills, fostered engagement and created an atmosphere of experiential learning in a comfortable space.

The news at news.utm.edu

[WestStar Leadership Program Class of ‘26 announced](#)

[UT Martin remembers Dr. Phillip Watkins](#)

[UTM launches Center for Southern Art](#)

UT MARTIN | NEWS

Upcoming Skyhawk Home Events

Tuesday, Nov. 25

- Men’s basketball vs. Brescia, 6 p.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

Sunday, Nov. 30

- Women’s basketball vs. Oakwood, 2 p.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

Tuesday, Dec. 2

- Men’s basketball vs. Charleston Southern, 11 a.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

Sunday, Dec. 7

- Men’s basketball vs. Alabama State, 2 p.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

Sunday, Dec. 14

- Basketball vs. Champion Christian (double-header): women at 2 p.m., men at 4:30 p.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

* - conference competition.

Full athletics schedules can be found at utmsports.com.

Dates and times are subject to change.



Candidates for the position of dean of the College of Business and Global Affairs who took part in public forums were (l-r) Dr. Shawn M. Keough, whose public forum was held Nov. 3; Dr. Frank C. Butler, whose public forum was held Nov. 4; and Dr. Lakshmi C. Goel, whose public forum was held Nov. 5. All public forums were held in the Phillip Watkins Auditorium in the Ed and Carolyn Boling University Center.

CBGA dean candidates visit UT Martin

Three candidates for the position of dean of the College of Business and Global Affairs visited the UT Martin campus Nov. 3-5 and took part in public forums during their visits.

Faculty and staff were encouraged to attend the public forums and offer feedback about the candidates.

Each candidate's public forum was held in the Phillip Watkins Auditorium in the Ed and Carolyn Boling University Center.

Dr. Shawn M. Keough visited UT Martin on Nov. 3.

Keough is the assistant dean and professor of management for the Emporia State University School of Business and Technology in Emporia, Kansas. In his current position, Keough oversees 22 full-time faculty for the AACSB-accredited business school.

He has held teaching and administrative positions at Emporia State since 2014.

Keough holds two associate of arts degrees from Arkansas State University in Beebe, Arkansas; a bachelor's degree from Lyon

College in Batesville, Arkansas; an MBA from Emporia State; and a doctorate from Mississippi State University in Starkville, Mississippi.

Dr. Frank C. Butler visited UT Martin on Nov. 4.

Butler is a tenured full professor and the Richard X. Zhang Endowed Professor of Business at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Including his current position, Butler has nearly two decades of higher education experience that covers strategic planning, accreditation leadership, academic governance and entrepreneurship program direction.

Butler holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from the University of Georgia and a doctorate from Florida State University.

Dr. Lakshmi C. Goel visited UT Martin on Nov. 5.

Goel is dean for the Al Akhawayn University School of Business in Ifrane, Morocco. As dean, Goel led development of the school's 2025-30 strategic plan, led

the AACSB accreditation process, and has responsibility for faculty and staff recruitment, retention and development.

Goel holds doctorate and master's degrees from the University of Houston. She also earned master's and bachelor's degrees from the University of Pune and the University of Mumbai, respectively, both located in India.

The successful candidate will lead UT Martin's own AACSB-accredited programs, including accounting, economics, finance, marketing, management and information systems. The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business accreditation represents the highest standard of achievement for business schools worldwide, held by 6% of business programs globally.

This leadership opportunity comes as the university has secured approval and funding to construct a new state-of-the-art Business Administration Building, with completion expected in 2030.

The position is expected to be filled by the end of 2025.

Promote a faculty or staff member by sending a YoUTM to addenda@utm.edu!

Read more UT Martin news at news.utm.edu!



Candidates for the position of dean of the College of Education, Health and Behavioral Sciences who took part in public forums were (l-r) Dr. Matthew R. Bice, whose public forum was held Nov. 18; Dr. Judy Beck, whose public forum was held Nov. 19; and Dr. Alberto "Bert" Ruiz, whose public forum was held Nov. 21. All public forums were held in the Phillip Watkins Auditorium in the Ed and Carolyn Boling University Center.

CEHBS dean candidates visit UT Martin

Three candidates for the position of dean of the College of Education, Health and Behavioral Sciences visited the UT Martin campus Nov. 18-21 and took part in public forums during their visits. Faculty and staff were encouraged to attend the public forums and offer feedback about the candidates.

Each candidate's public forum was held in the Phillip Watkins Auditorium in the Ed and Carolyn Boling University Center.

Dr. Matthew R. Bice visited UT Martin on Nov. 18.

Bice is currently the provost and vice president for academic affairs at Baker University in Baldwin City, Kansas. He also serves as dean of graduate and online education for the school of professional and graduate studies in the Baker University School of Education.

Bice earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in kinesiology from the University of Texas of the Permian Basin and his doctorate in health education from Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

Dr. Judy Beck visited UT Martin on Nov.

19.

Beck currently serves as a faculty member in the University of South Carolina Aiken School of Education, where she previously served as dean. In that position, she provided strategic leadership for educator preparation programs and led a successful CAEP reaccreditation with no stipulations. CAEP is the Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation.

Before her tenure at USC Aiken, Beck held academic positions at the University of South Carolina Upstate, including director of Teacher Education Programs and interim vice chancellor of the Greenville Campus.

Beck holds a bachelor's degree in secondary education with comprehensive science certification from Bowling Green State University and two advanced degrees from the University of Toledo: a master's degree in secondary education and a doctorate in curriculum and instruction.

Dr. Alberto "Bert" Ruiz visited UT Martin on Nov. 21.

Ruiz currently serves as professor

of kinesiology at Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas, where he previously served as dean of the College of Education and Human Development.

He has more than three decades of higher education leadership experience, including positions as vice president for academic affairs at the University of Louisiana Monroe and dean of the College of Education and Human Performance at Texas A&M University-Kingsville.

Ruiz holds bachelor's and master's degrees in kinesiology from Texas A&M University in Kingsville and a Doctor of Education in physical education from the University of Houston.

Faculty and staff may provide feedback on the candidates through Monday, Dec. 1. The link to the survey can be found [at this site](#).

Information about the candidates for dean of the College of Education, Health and Behavioral Sciences can be found [at this site](#).

You Tell Me

• **Question** – Given the recent annual change to daylight saving time, are all building and facility clocks on the main campus centrally controlled? If not, who controls which clocks?

• **Answer** – All the academic buildings on the south side of University Street are on the Primex Clock System. The Physical Plant checks them twice per year when the time changes just to be sure all are working correctly. There are two locations for the main controllers to cover all the campus – one at the Johnson EPS Building and one at Gooch Hall.

Submit your questions to Addenda at addenda@utm.edu.

UTM counseling program receives recognition

The UT Martin counseling program received positive recognition at the 2025 Tennessee Counseling Association's annual conference.

A notable highlight was the presentation titled "Effectiveness of Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy on Foster Youth for Reducing Placement Changes Based on Behavior," delivered by counseling student Bethany Mesaros and Dr. Derrick Shepard, assistant professor of counseling.

This session attracted a significant audience, reflecting strong interest in the topic and the quality of the research presented.

In addition, several counseling students and program alumni contributed meaningfully to the conference in various capacities.

Their involvement as presenters, volunteers or attendees underscored the



Posing at the 2025 Tennessee Counseling Association's annual conference – held Nov. 13-16 in Franklin – are (l-r) Ashley Dooley, a graduate counseling major from Culleoka; Dr. Derrick Shepard, assistant professor of counseling; Rebecca King Rowland, a graduate counseling major from Hermitage; and Bethany Mesaros, a graduate counseling major from Morrison. Shepard and Mesaros presented at the conference. Two alumni of the UTM counseling program not shown in the photo are Punam Patel, who is now on staff at Centerstone, and Amanda Gienow, a doctoral student in the Counselor Education and Supervision Program at Lindsey Wilson University.

program's active engagement counseling community and commitment to excellence and within the professional demonstrated a continued professional growth.

Sterbinsky speaks to Kiwanis Club



Pictured at the Nov. 12 meeting of the Kiwanis Club of Martin are (l-r) Allan Sterbinsky, director of the newly-formed Center for Rural Innovation at UT Martin; Dr. Carrie Humphreys, chair of the Department of Political Science and Global Studies; Sara Sieber, Kiwanis program chair for November; and Katie Parr, Kiwanis president. Parr presented Sterbinsky and Humphreys with a certificate of appreciation showing that a donation will be made to Captain's Pantry at UT Martin. Sterbinsky said that three types of paid student internships are available through the center: working with local government or organizations, commercial or technical reporting for government agencies, and social or cultural projects of regional importance.

Dance education celebrates 21 years at UTM

The UT Martin dance education program celebrated 21 years as a part of the curriculum in its fall 2025 showcase, "Lyft Off," performed Nov. 19 in the Harriet Fulton Theatre in the UTM Fine Arts Building.

The UTM dance ensemble premiered "Candles of Celebration" to honor the program's milestone of entering its third

decade.

JC Burnett-Gordon is the assistant professor of dance and dance education at UT Martin.

"This work was more than choreography," he said. "It was a tribute to the light that has guided this program for over two decades.

"That includes Dr. Carolyn Byrum, whose vision sparked the flame and set the

foundation; Tiffany Glover and Alix Miller, who shaped the program's early identity; Claudia Morris and adjunct professor Nadia Beard, who nurtured and uplifted its growth; and professor Sarah McCormick, whose 17-year era elevated excellence, artistry and innovation."

Burnett-Gordon joined the UTM faculty last August.



Shown performing in the UTM dance ensemble's "Candles of Celebration" from front to back are Carrie Rosenthal, a freshman fine arts and performing arts major from Antioch; Mage Wilke, a junior fine arts and performing arts major from Lebanon; Bridget Troogstad, a freshman fine arts and performing arts major from Chicago; Hannah Newman, a junior fine arts and performing arts major from Jackson; and Elynn Beebe, a senior environmental and organismal biology major from Jackson. The fall showcase was performed Nov. 19 in the Harriet Fulton Theatre in the Fine Arts Building.

Performing "Sugar Plum Pas de Deux" are Duncan Hollis (left), a senior fine arts major from Union City, and Hannah Newman, a junior fine arts major from Jackson. The performance was part of the "Candles of Celebration" the UTM dance ensemble performed to mark the dance education program's 21st year on the UT Martin campus.





UTM, UT Extension to host ag finance workshop

The 2025 growing season marks yet another challenging year for Tennessee's row crop production, with high input costs, low commodity prices and drought impacting overall profitability.

To assist farmers with financial management, University of Tennessee Extension and UT Martin are partnering to offer "Financing Your Operation in 2026: West Tennessee Row Crop Workshop."

This free educational program is open to the public and will be held twice on Monday, Dec. 1. The first session is scheduled from 8 to 11 a.m. in the Champions Club of Hardy M. Graham Stadium. It will be held again from 5 to 8 p.m. at [the West Tennessee](#)

[AgResearch and Education Center at 605 Airways Blvd. in Jackson.](#)

Applicable strategies and timely information on a variety of farm financial topics will be covered, including:

- Vendor financing
- Debt carryover
- Consolidating loans
- Share and cash rental agreements
- Machinery costs and values
- Seed, fertilizer and chemical prices
- Selecting crop insurance

"Challenges within the row crop industry have resulted in substantial monetary losses in consecutive years for many corn, cotton, soybean and wheat farmers," said Aaron

Smith, Extension economist and interim assistant dean of UT Extension. "As we finish harvest in 2025 and look ahead to the upcoming growing season, we want to equip farmers with the knowledge necessary to navigate financial challenges and be in a position to obtain the credit required to plant crops in 2026."

Complimentary meals will be provided and registration is required.

Those interested can sign up for the workshop in Martin by visiting [at this site](#) or the workshop in Jackson by visiting [this site](#).

For more information about the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, visit utia.tennessee.edu.

Campus Calendar

Monday, Dec. 1

- "Financing Your Operation in 2026: West Tennessee Row Crop Workshop," 8-11 a.m., Champions Club, Hardy M. Graham Stadium.
- Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, 4 p.m., 124 Gooch Hall.

Tuesday, Dec. 2

- Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, 2 p.m.,

124 Gooch Hall.

- Holiday Open House and Toy Drive, 4-6 p.m., Russell Duncan Ballroom, Ed and Carolyn Boling University Center; RSVP to 731-881-7507 or abates17@utm.edu.

Friday, Dec. 5

- Harlem Globetrotters: The 100-Year Tour, 7 p.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam Center, [tickets here](#).

Saturday, Dec. 13

- Commencement, 10 a.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam Center, students earning degrees from the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, College of Business and Global Affairs, and College of Engineering and Natural Sciences (graduate and undergraduate).
- Commencement, 2 p.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam Center, students earning

degrees from the College of Education, Health and Behavioral Sciences and College of Humanities and Fine Arts (graduate and undergraduate).

Events are subject to cancellation; dates, times and sites are subject to change. Send free-admission, on-campus events to Addenda at addenda@utm.edu.

Making college connections

Destin Tucker (standing at right), assistant vice chancellor for enrollment management, speaks to Weakley County high school juniors who were on campus Nov. 24 for College Connection Day, an opportunity for them to explore UTM and other post-secondary education options. The students explored the academic departments, went on a campus tour and heard from current UTM students who are from Weakley County.



CHANCELLOR'S
Holiday Brunch
IT'S A SKYHAWK CHRISTMAS MORNING

DEC. 18TH 10:30AM
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Chancellor's Holiday Brunch is open to exempt and non-exempt staff members.

NOVEMBER 3 - NOVEMBER 25

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Gobble Gobble

addenda

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